

EVERY BRAND MUST BE ITS OWN MEDIA COMPANY.

The best ones own the narrative.

At the start of the 20th century, there were fewer than 3,000 cars on the road in France. Freedom to travel independently was a little-known luxury.

André and Édouard Michelin, two brothers with an emerging tire company, needed to compel the few existing drivers to use their cars and ultimately buy more tires.

1900

But a call to travel meant nothing without places worth traveling to. So in 1900, the Michelin Guide was born, a free publication featuring popular restaurants, hotels, mechanics and gas stations.

Nearly 120 years later, a tire brand still owns the indisputable rating system for the finest restaurants in the world.



Perhaps their vision motivated future peers to take control. Today, our leading voice for *motivation* comes from a shoe brand. *Independence* is owned by a computer company. *Extreme adventure* is presented by an energy drink. *Freedom* is the territory of a gun rights organization.

EXHIBIT

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The best brands have always understood that the key to retaining influence was to control the narrative. But what they haven't always controlled was the means in which to distribute it.

This is where Ackerman McQueen's modern story begins.

1999

In 1999, many businesses in the energy sector realized they had important narratives to deliver to a niche group of influencers. While communication seemed limited to mass distribution, they knew they weren't selling a mass product to a mass audience.

One of our partners, Williams Energy, felt a growing concern that too much money was being spent reaching people that didn't feel anything for their brand. So, we lost the business.

However, their CEO offered a dim hope for salvation in this request:

“

If you can figure out how to get the 500 people that matter most to my business in my living room for a drink every night, I'll give you your money back.

”

At the time, investors, executives and analysts, in order to receive timely energy information, kept TVs in their offices running constantly in hopes of catching an energy headline here and there. They wanted energy news only, but had no way of receiving it.

Not only could Williams Energy provide this value to these few influencers, certain technologies, while in their infancy, could stream news directly to them – with no dependence on any third party. They could control the story *and* how it was experienced.



Energy News Live, a top-of-the-hour daily broadcast, became the first news program to stream online on behalf of a single brand. Flagship studios were constructed in their Tulsa-headquartered trading floor and Washington, D.C., supported by national and international satellite bureaus.

A team of full-time reporters provided live updates, in-depth journalism and exclusive interviews with industry leaders, elected officials, key traders and media influentials. And nearly six years before the invention of YouTube, *Energy News Live* streamed from a proprietary technology platform that enabled direct connection to the brand's most important audiences.

Williams Energy's commitment to owning a narrative had firmly positioned them as a clear leader in the energy space.

Brands could, in fact, become their own media companies. It was as successful a concept as it was controversial.

Brands were supposed to be advertisers, not news outlets. Journalism schools laughed at our philosophy, local stations thought it was cute and the media refused to see these brands as peers.

WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES AT ODDS WITH MANY IN OUR INDUSTRY.

Those who crave mass impressions, viral videos or short-term results have never understood the lasting value of this type of media investment. Those who believe in this concept see it as the most efficient and unique means by which to build influence over time.

As we waited for the media industry to catch up, we honed our craft. We built media companies on behalf of theme parks, indigenous cultures, personal legacies, the Second Amendment to the Constitution and more. Each of these endeavors didn't grow their influence through full-page spreads, social media posts or TV spots alone. They recognized that there was white space in a narrative that they could control with years-long dedication to owned storytelling.

OUR MEDIA EVOLUTION



We live today in a world that values niche reporting and emotional storytelling more than ever before. It can come from anywhere. More and more, it is expected to come from the brands.

EVERY BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUAL HAS THE ABILITY TO BECOME A MEDIA COMPANY.

If you have an audience that cares about what you have to say, you can create and distribute content with complete autonomy. No one else should capture or distribute those stories better than you. And in this era of communication, it has never been more affordable or efficient for you to begin.